

Caregiver Connection

August 2011

A monthly publication for Washington state foster and adoptive families and relative caregivers.
WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION



Floating the idea of foster care

On lakes and rivers around the western United States this summer, public awareness of foster care is being raised at about 150 miles an hour.

That's because of the Unlimited Light hydroplane Miss Foster Care, a bright red boat adorned with the symbol and motto from recent years, "Foster Care, Change A Lifetime."

The boat is owned by Marie and Joe Frauenheim of Issaquah and driven by Kayleigh Perkins Mallory, 23, whose brother Brian Perkins is also a hydroplane racer.

"The more people we can educate about the need to take care of society's children the better I feel," Marie said. "I do this because I want to believe this world can be a better place and I know it starts with the children."

Many people are unaware of the need for foster homes and the situation in which kids find themselves.

While the Unlimited Light Hydroplane Racing Association (www.ulhra.org) stresses a family and fan-friendly atmosphere at the race venues, the UL-72 boat is particularly in tune with that goal.

Family members, including Joe and Marie's youngest daughter in Arizona, are involved with the foster care system and from that involvement came the idea to promote it on their boat.

And promote it they do.



UL-72 Miss Foster Care driver Kayleigh Perkins Mallory

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In Washington State, they have taken the boat to the Mariners "We Are Family Day" event at Safeco Field in May, the Night of a Thousand Dreams sponsored by the Foster Parent Association of Washington State in January and will bring the boat to Camp To Belong which reunites separated siblings for five days in August. They will participate in the Seafair Torchlight Parade and recently displayed the boat at the Crossroads area in Bellevue, where thousands of kids came through.

Kayleigh has been involved with boat racing for several years. She saw her first unlimited hydroplane race at Seafair before she was one year old. She said she really enjoys talking to the kids and foster parents she has met through the promotion of foster care. She and her teammates have won the Unlimited Light championship in past years, although this year has been challenging – the boat caught fire once and the boat she has been hosed down in another race. But she loves the personal part of the foster care message.

"We get to connect with a lot of foster parents; we have met some amazing kids with some amazing stories," she said. "It really makes you feel good to be able to talk to them, hear their stories and have hope for their futures."

Children living with grandparents

In 2009, 7.8 million children lived with a least one grandparent, a 64 percent increase since 1991 when 4.7 million children lived with a grandparent, according to a new report from the U.S. Census Bureau. USA

Today interviewed Generations United Executive Director Donna Butts about this important finding. Learn more at www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/children/cb11-117.html



Voices of children

This month, we feature two more winners of the annual Voices of Children contest, coordinated by the Family Education and Support Network and supported by Twin County Credit Union. These are entries from children living with relatives.

Living with my grandparents has made a positive difference in my life.

I live with my Grandma and Nanny, but spend the weekends with my Grandpa and Uncle.

All of my grandparents work, but now when they get home from work they spend all their free time taking good care of me and my brother. I know they must be tired after working so hard, but they always have time to do anything for us.

They take us shopping and buy us cool stuff. I know they don't have a lot of money so it makes me happy when I get new things.

Me and my little brother are so lucky to have a house that is clean, safe, full of fun, and grandparents that will always be here for us.

I hope that I will never forget all the things they have ever done in my life. They make me feel so special.

— Kaylynn, Age 8, Centralia, WA

My Aunt Teresa has made a positive impact on my life. She is my guardian, my savior and in a way, my Mother. I am her brother's daughter, my dad passed away in 1993, when I was 9 months old. I have been raised by my grandparents. At age 11, I went to live with my real mom and stepdad. This was a neglecting home environment. My aunt saved me and placed me in her loving home at age 12. She has taught me how to love and be loved.

Now at age 17, she encourages me to graduate, she helps me with school and is always close by when I need her. I love when I share my feelings, thoughts, disappointments and school work with her. She has inspired me to fulfill my college career in fashion design.

My aunt may have not been there for my first word, step, school day, or first skinned knee, but she was there for my eighth grade graduation, first day of high school, first boyfriend, the day I got my braces off, my first prom and is there for me now. God was always there for me, because he sent my aunt. If not I would be still silently crying for help if she did not open up her arms. I dedicate this story to my aunt Teresa. I love her with all my heart and will never let her go.

— Kalina, Age 17, Hoodsport, WA

Upcoming trainings from the Resource Family Training Institute

RFTI has upcoming trainings that will be of interest to all caregivers. Every month the Institute offers a variety of trainings in each region. The Caregiver Connection would like to highlight three important topics offered in early August and September. Trainings vary by region, so please make sure to check the dates and any pre-registration requirements on the training calendar at the RFTI website www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/Ongoing.asp. You can also call your regional trainer to obtain information when these classes will be offered in your area. If you have teens, children in school, or have just received your first placement – these classes are for you!

1. So You Have Your First Placement, Now What? (Region 1 South)

DATE: 8/2/11

TIME: 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Yakima

TRAINER: Ryan Kruger

DESCRIPTION: This class will review all those NUTS AND BOLTS that you may have forgotten from your initial Pre-Service Class, and provide you with forms and information that you need for the day-to-day business of foster parenting.

2. Got Teens? (Region 2 North)

DATE: 9/23/11

TIME: 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Coupeville: Service Alternatives, 20th NW 1st St. (Enter at back of building)

TRAINER: Joan Sager

DESCRIPTION: Presented by Rick Butt, MSW Need Support & Resources? Classes include how to empower your teen as they move into young adulthood, skills to help your teen achieve self sufficiency, positive youth development and how to identify transitional living services and resources for your teen.

Pre-registration is required, e-mail Joan Sager to register. sajk300@dshs.wa.gov

3. So You Have Your First Placement, Now What? (Region 2 North)

DATE: 8/15/11

TIME: 9:30 – 12:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Lynnwood: DCFS Office 20311 52nd Ave. W 2nd Flr. Conf. Room

TRAINER: Joan Sager

DESCRIPTION: This class will review all those NUTS AND BOLTS that you may have forgotten from your initial Pre-Service Class, and provide you with forms and information that you need for the day-to-day business of foster parenting.

Register by e-mailing Joan Sager. mailto:sajk300@dshs.wa.gov

4. Educational Advocacy: Tools for Caregivers Part One (Region 3 North)

DATE: 8/09/11

TIME: 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

LOCATION: 1949 South State Street, Room 195, Tacoma, WA. 98405

TRAINER: Lynne Welton

DESCRIPTION: This is part one of a two-part Educational Advocacy training. This workshop will focus on school involvement, kindergarten through grade 12 and educational policy. Sherry Stroud, a Peer Advocate Trainer will provide lots of information/resources and suggestions for working collaboratively with schools on your specific issue. To register contact Lynne Welton at 253-983-6435 or email lynne.welton@dshs.wa.gov

5. Educational Advocacy: Tools for Caregivers Part Two (Region 3 North)

DATE: 8/11/11

TIME: 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

LOCATION: 1949 South State Street, Room 195, Tacoma, WA. 98405

TRAINER: Lynne Welton

DESCRIPTION: This is part two of a two-part Educational Advocacy training. This workshop will focus on school involvement, kindergarten through grade 12 and educational policy. Sherry Stroud, a Peer Advocate Trainer will provide lots of information/resources and suggestions for working collaboratively with schools on your specific issue. To register contact Lynne Welton at 253-983-6435 or email lynne.welton@dshs.wa.gov

Ideas for adoptive parents

BOOK: Beneath the Mask: Understanding Adopted Teens

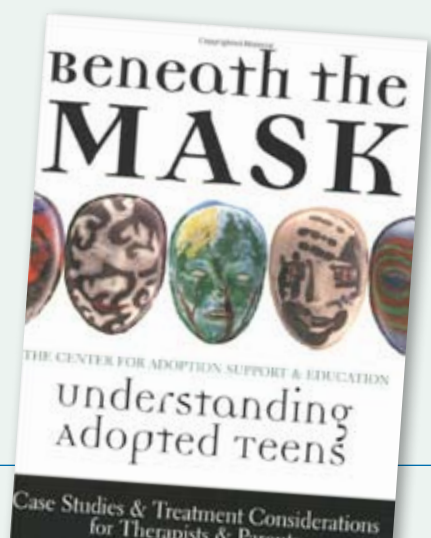
AUTHOR: Debbie Riley and Dr. John Meeks

Adoptive parents who have read and reviewed this book describe it as exceptional. It “draws the correct conclusions and spells out the issues... most adoptive parents relate to what another adoptive parent has written as very credible... they have been there... no one could understand the issues of an adoptive parent to a teen or pre teen unless they have done it”. This book is a wonderful reference for all adoptive parents and professionals who work with adopted teens. Written in an easy to read manner, you won’t find professional jargon parents don’t understand. It receives high recommendations for all adoptive parents to help prepare them for the teen years.

The authors discuss 6 common adoption-related questions every adopted teen wants answered whether they were adopted as an infant, or as an older child.

1. Why was I adopted?
2. What’s the truth about my birth parents?
3. Why do I feel different from everyone else?
4. What will happen when I leave home?
5. Who am I?
6. Is it okay if I think about my birth parents?

If you have an adopted teen, or if your teen is struggling, this book provides ingredients to a deeper understanding of adoption issues. Even if your adopted teen is sailing through adolescence, it is important to understand the kind of thoughts they may be reluctant to share with you. This is a great help for all adoptive parents, particularly for those whose children may have experienced early trauma.



Important numbers to know when you take care of children in out-of-home care

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

ON-GOING AND CRISIS SUPPORTS FOR FOSTER PARENTS

Under contracts with the state, three private agencies are working to build supports for you within the foster care community. Supports include hubs, support groups, and matching new foster parents with veteran foster parents. To get connected:

- If you live in Eastern Washington, the Olympic Peninsula down through Pacific County or from Thurston County to Clark County, call 1-888-794-1794.
- If you live in King County, call the Fostering Together liaison, 206-850-4420. If you live in Region 2 North (counties north of King County), call the Fostering Together liaison 360-220-3785.
- If you live in Pierce or Kitsap counties, call 253-473-9252.
- If you live in King County, the Friends of Youth CARE program provides short-term counseling, education and support to help you care for your most difficult children. 1-888-263-3457 or 206-915-0459.

Family Help Line: 1-800-932-HOPE or www.parenttrust.org. The Family Help Line is a free, statewide training and referral line for the families of Washington state. Last year, the Family Help Line received more than 5,000 calls and requests for information. Calls can last up to 90 minutes and parents can call as often as needed.

The **Fostering Well-Being Care Coordination Unit** can help answer health-related questions or help you work on health related issues with children/youth in your care. Contact information: 1-800-422-3263 or 1-360-725-2626 (8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) or e-mail: dhsfwbccu@dshs.wa.gov. Please take care not to include any identifying information about a child unless sent through a secure e-mail account.

Support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect: Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team (FIRST) 253-219-6782. Monday through Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

Mental Health Crisis Line Information: The crisis line telephone number for your county or region is available on the DSHS Mental Health Division website at: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/crisis.shtml>.

GENERAL FOSTER PARENT INFORMATION FOR THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

FPAWS: Foster Parent Association of Washington State is an all volunteer non-profit association. It is led by experienced caregivers who provide support and helpful services to all caregivers (foster, adoptive, and kinship) in Washington State. In addition, FPAWS advocates for caregivers with Washington's legislative officials, all levels of Children's Administration staff and other community service providers to enhance the child welfare system. Contact FPAWS at fpaws.org or 1-800-391-CARE (2273).

Kitsap and Pierce County information about becoming a foster parent or to receive foster parent support: Foster Care Resource Network, 253-473-9252. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day.

RESOURCE INFORMATION AVAILABLE STATEWIDE

Get connected to information on resources in your area by calling 211 – a toll free number.

Girl Scouts of Western Washington: Fostering a Future: MeccaYS@girlscouts.org

Women, Infant and Children Program (WIC):

<http://www.parenthelp123.org/resources/food-resources>

Children's Administration Foster Parent Website: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

Children's Administration Foster Parent Training Website – Trainings are open to all licensed foster parents, licensed relative caregivers and unlicensed caregivers. For information about foster parent and caregiver training, check out:

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION FOSTER CARE LISTSERV

Join the 2,900 people who have subscribed to the List Serve

<http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1> for updated information on resources for the work you do in caring for children.

Family Planning Services are designed to help avoid unwanted or mistimed pregnancy and are available through your local Community Service Office (CSO). Each CSO has a full time Family Planning Nurse to help provide services to Medicaid eligible clients. There is also a Family Planning hotline number 1-800-770-4334.



Immunizations

In these very challenging times, Washington State passed a law that further helps protect kids from vaccine-preventable diseases.

In a recent report on kindergarten immunization coverage, our state was identified as having the highest rate of exemptions from required immunizations: 6.2 percent. This change in law should reduce that rate.

By comparison, most states have exemption rates of less than 3 percent. The new immunization exemption law takes effect on July 22, 2011. It makes changes to how a parent or guardian exempts a child from immunization requirements for school or child care. Parents can still claim a medical, religious, or philosophical exemption, but the new law requires them to get information on the benefits and risks of immunization from a licensed health care provider before they claim an exemption.

If you have any questions about immunization records, please check with the child's social worker.



Reminder

E-mail between social workers and caregivers is often an efficient tool for sharing information about what is happening with a child or the case plan. Please remember that email is not automatically secure. This means email must not contain identifying information about the child: no names or other identifying information, unless the e-mail is sent using some security protection, such as encryption.

We appreciate your careful guardianship of information about our children